

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUITO 02353 131940Z
ACTION DHA-02

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 IGA-02 OMB-01 TRSE-00

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P R 131735Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3887

INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE QUITO 2353

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SHUM, EC

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER COMMENTS ON USG HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY

1. IN A PRESS CONFERENCE APRIL 9 AT THE BUENOS AIRES AIRPORT AND AGAIN IN A CONFERENCE APIRL 11 IN QUITO, FONMIN JORGE SALVADOR CRITICIZED THE MANNER IN WHICH THE USG HAS CARRIED OUT ITS HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVE. IN PRACTICALLY IDENTICAL COMMENTS, SALVADOR MAINTAINED THAT A COUNTRY'S BILATERAL FOREIGN POLICY SHOULD NOT REVOLVE AROUND THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN RIGHTS. HE NOTED THAT THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION EXISTS TO FURTHER HUMAN RIGHTS GOALS AND RECOMMENDED THAT THE U.S. PURSUE ITS EFFORTS THROUGH THAT CHANNEL. THE FACT THAT THE COMMISSION HAS BEEN EXCESSIVELY POLITICIZED AND HAS DISTORTED THE REAL HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES IS NOT SUFFICIENT REASON TO ABANDON IT, SAID SALVADOR.

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INSTEAD, EFFORTS SHOULD BE MADE TO REFORM THAT COMMISSION. SALVADOR ADDED THAT ALLEGED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN LATIN AMERICA WERE BEING EXAMINED WITH A MICROSCOPE WHILE "TERRIBLE VIOLATIONS" IN OTHER AREAS WERE BEING IGNORED. HE REAFFIRMED ECUADOR'S POLICY OF DEFENSE AND SUPPORT OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

2. COMMENT: SALVADOR'S COMMENTS REFLECT VERY REAL CONCERNS WITHIN ECUADOR OVER THE INTER-HEMISPERIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM. ECUADOR FEELS ITS NATIONAL SECURITY THREATENED BY PERU AND DEPENDS HEAVILY ON GOOD RELATIONS WITH SOUTHERN CONE COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY CHILE, IN ORDER TO HELP BLUNT THAT THREAT. AT THE SAME TIME, THE SOUTHERN CONE HAS BEEN MAKING STRONG EFFORTS TO ENLIST ECUADOR, WHICH HAS A RELATIVELY CLEAN HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD, IN A REGIONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE US INITIATIVES. SALVADOR'S COMMENTS WERE MADE IN A CONTEXT OF AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO ARGENTINA (SIMILAR VISITS ARE PLANNED TO CHILE, URUGUAY AND BRAZIL LATER THIS MONTH). AND, UNDOUBTEDLY HE FELT OBLIGED TO MAKE SOME STATEMENTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS. HE TOOK THE ROUTE OF RELATIVELY MILD CRITICISM OF THE US IN THE FORM OF A RECOMMENDATION THAT WE CONCENTRATE OUR EFFORTS VIA THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION.

3. THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND THE AMBASSADOR DISCUSSED HUMAN RIGHTS PRIVATELY SEVERAL WEEKS AGO. SALVADOR EXPRESSED PRIDE IN HIS OWN COUNTRY'S GOOD RECORD IN THIS FIELD AND SATISFACTION WITH PRESIDENT CARTER'S DESIRE TO IMPROVE HUMAN RIGHTS, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME EXPRESSING FEAR THAT THE "UNILATERAL" APPROACH OF THE US TO THE PROBLEM (E.G., CUTTING FOREIGN AID AND PUBLIC CRITICISM OF SPECIFIC COUNTRIES) WAS POLARIZING LATIN AMERICA AND PUTTING LIBERTARIAN REGIMES IN THE NORTH OF THE CONTINENT IN A DIFFICULT POSITION OF HAVING TO CHOOSE SIDES. THE AMBASSADOR INTENDS TO RENEW HIS DIALOGUE WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER ON THIS SUBJECT TO SEEK HIS IDEAS ON HOW WE CAN COOPERATE IN PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS WHILE MINIMIZING THE NEGATIVE IMPACT ON US/LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS THAT HE FEARS.

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BLOOMFIELD

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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